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## **German Language Reception of Robert Burns in Austria**

Eleoma Joshua

In contrast to the German and Swiss reception, the literary reception in Austria of the poems and songs of Robert Burns has never been fully developed as a separate field of research. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Austrian responses to Burns, which took the form of translations, adaptations, reviews and essays have not been studied in depth or in relation to each other and little has been researched on the general trends and developments.<sup>1</sup> Also the impact of Burns on Austrian travellers to Scotland in the nineteenth century has been overlooked in the fragmentary analysis of the influence of Burns on Austrians, and astonishingly the Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal's adaptation of Burns's 'Lines written on a bank-note' of 1890 has not received any critical attention in the major surveys of the history of the German-language reception of Burns.

This essay will examine the nature of the Austro-German reaction to Burns in the nineteenth century, and the ways in which it differs from the German reception. In this survey of the literary reception I leave to one side the extensive musical engagement with Burns during the Austrian Empire (1804-67) and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918), and note that Austrian composers heavily relied on Standard German translations that were published in Germany. The following Austrian composers all set Burns to music in this period: Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), Anton Hackel (1799-1846), Karl Goldmark (1830-1915), Karl Ferdinand Konradin (1833-84), Carl Zeller (1842-98), Ignaz Brüll (1848-1907), Siegmund von Hausegger (1872-1948) and Alban Berg (1885-1935).

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<sup>1</sup> The only studies of Burns's German reception that briefly discuss his impact in Austria are Kupper (1979) and Selle (1981), but these accounts do not address what is distinctive about the Austrian reception of Burns. Nagl (1932) lists two nineteenth-century Austrian poets who adapted Burns's poems and songs: Ludwig Sprung and Albert Zipper (1932, 4: 1396-97). For the Hungarian-language reception of Burns, see Bogár (2003).

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The beginnings of the Austrian engagement with Robert Burns can be traced back to the Viennese writer Maximilian Freiherr von Löwenthal's (1799-1872) two-volume account of his journey to Scotland, *Skizzen aus dem Tagebuch einer Reise durch Frankreich, Großbritannien und Deutschland* (Sketches from the diary of a journey through France, Great Britain and Germany) (1825). In the second volume, Löwenthal mentions Burns alongside Ossian, Macpherson and Walter Scott, and reports that he had acquired a copy of Currie's edition of Burns (1822) on his journey. Löwenthal was known in Vienna for the literary salon that he hosted, which was frequented by the Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau. In his travel description, Löwenthal translated parts of Currie's biographical introduction and concentrated in particular on the element of genius in Burns, his agricultural background, and also the idea of Burns the ploughman poet who was venerated because of his poetic disposition and celebrated in the noblest circles in Scotland, only to be neglected later by the same society with tragic consequences (II, 110, 119). It is a naïve view of Burns that tallies with Rosemary Selle's and Frauke Reitemeier's periodization of the first phase of the German-language reception of Burns from 1786 to 1829, when few German translations were available (Reitemeier 2011, 74). In this period, Selle identifies that the biographical focus is in the foreground, especially 'the conflict between genius (Burns the poet) and morality (Burns the man)' and 'the emphasis is on the natural, uneducated poet, with no comment as yet on craftsmanship and technique' (1981, 53). Unusually, Löwenthal mediates Burns to the Austrian readership by comparing his fate to that of the German Romantic E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose death in 1822 would still have been fresh in the minds of Germans and Austrians. Löwenthal considers Burns and Hoffmann as equal in their being slaves to their passions and their addiction to alcohol (II, 110). In essence, his travel description ultimately reveals that the early reception of Burns in the Austrian Empire began on Scottish soil with a Highland tour of

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Ossianic Scotland in 1825. It was an experience that was to have an effect on another of Löwenthal's early works, *Die Caledonia* (The Caledonia) (1826), an Ossianic play that is virtually unknown today which dramatizes Ossian's youthful heroism.

Before the 1830s, Burns was simply not well-known enough in the Austrian Empire to merit much commentary and had not yet made the same impact as Macpherson/Ossian or Walter Scott. There were of course a few references in literary periodicals and newspapers, for example Johann Joseph Littrow's review of Allan Cunningham's *Biographical and Critical History of the British Literature of the Last Fifty Years* (1834) in the Viennese journal *Jahrbücher der Literatur* (Yearbooks of Literature) (1837) gives a potted biography of Burns and presents him as Scotland's wunderkind and nature poet, who together with William Cowper in England ushered in a new era of poetry ('Notizenblatt' 1837, 95-97). The Viennese newspaper *Feierstunden für Freunde der Kunst, Wissenschaft und Literatur* (Leisurely hours for friends of art, science and literature) (1834) announced the forthcoming publication of the Leipzig edition of *The Works of Robert Burns* (1835), advertising 'the simplicity and freshness, strength and tenderness, an unmistakeable purity' in his writing.<sup>2</sup> This announcement is supported by Goethe's endorsement of Burns, quoted from his introduction to the German translation of Thomas Carlyle's biography of Friedrich Schiller (1830). In 1841 the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* (Viennese magazine for art, literature, theatre and fashion) reviewed Carlyle's lectures *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1841) and focused firstly on Carlyle's discussion of Goethe as a representative of the literary hero and secondly Burns, who is heralded as the rising star in the 'Germanic world' ('T. Carlyle' 1841, 559). For this Austrian reviewer, Burns is 'one of the most important Germanic people of the eighteenth century' (1841, 559). In keeping with the contemporary idea that

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<sup>2</sup> 'Einfalt und Frische, Kraft und Zartheit, eine unverkennbare Lauterkeit' ('Notizenblatt' 1834, 515).

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German- and English-speaking cultures were closely linked, particularly linguistically, the reviewer predicts a new appreciation for Burns's talent and lauds his "Germanic" origins:

Yes, he was of true and genuine Germanic extraction; solid as the rocks of the Harz Mountains, all rock but infused with wellsprings of vibrant softness.<sup>3</sup>

Burns is characterized as a wild, passionate and Germanic poet who possessed 'a genuine, raw originality' and was 'simple, rural and honest' ('T. Carlyle' 1841, 559).<sup>4</sup> It is a romanticized view of the tragic rise and fall Burns which refers solely to his personality and disposition, and does not discuss any of his poems or songs.

Such literary newspapers and magazines indicate that Burns was just being introduced to the Austrians around the mid-nineteenth century. Accessibility to original works seems to have been restricted; according to the censorship records from 1801 to 1848, the Allman edition of Burns's *Poetical Works* (1824) was given the status 'erga schedam' in 1828, which was the second highest restricted access rating.<sup>5</sup> The term 'erga schedam' meant that it could only be read by trusted readers whom the censors regarded as reliable citizens (Ziegler 2006, 121). From 1801 until 1848, in the Austrian Empire strict censorship laws were enforced by the Police and Censorship Authority (Polizei-und Zensurhofstelle), which was run by Josef von Sedlnitzsky (Marx 1959, 17). Imported books and manuscripts submitted for publication were checked, and pre-publication censorship reached far into the provinces. In the provinces the revision offices (Revisionsämter) worked closely with the relevant local government

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<sup>3</sup> 'Ja, der war vom rechten und ächten germanischen Zeuge; kernhaft wie der Harzfels, ganz Fels, aber von Quellen lebendiger Weichheit durchrieselt' ('T. Carlyle' 1841, 559).

<sup>4</sup> 'eine gediegene rauhe Ächtheit; schlicht, ländlich, bieder' ('T. Carlyle' 1841, 559).

<sup>5</sup> The database of censored books in Austria between 1750 and 1848 is available via the following website and draws on the records of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Austrian National Library) and the archives of the University of Vienna:

<http://www.univie.ac.at/censorship/index.php?q=Burns&j=&id=237843&f=&i=&s=&so=0>

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office (Landesstelle) and the regional governor who was responsible for enforcing the censorship laws to ensure that every single written document relating to a region in Austria and its institutions was inspected, and this included the censorship of daily newspapers, but not periodicals (Marx 1959, 17). Many Austrian writers tried to evade the oppressive censorship laws by emigrating, although these still applied to Austrians living in other countries (Marx 1959, 8). The laws were not relaxed until after 1848, with the ascension of Kaiser Franz Joseph I (Marx 1959, 8). Not only was the Allman edition censored but also the 1863 edition of Ferdinand Freiligrath's collection of political songs *Ein Glaubensbekenntnis* (A confession of faith) (1844), which contained his German translation of Burns's 'A Man's A Man for A' That'.<sup>6</sup> This received the highest censorship grade and could only be read in exceptional cases. The stringent censorship conditions during the Habsburg rule is likely to be one of the reasons why no anthologies of Burns in German translation were produced in the Austrian Empire.

Although Burns in the original and Freiligrath's translations of Burns were restricted reading, collections by other German translators of Burns do not appear in the surviving censorship records and were probably available to Austrian readers. The first anthologies of Burns's songs and poems began to be published in Germany around 1840. These were all Standard German translations in book-length collections, starting with Freiligrath (1838), Philipp Kaufmann (1839), Heinrich Julius Heintze (1840) and Wilhelm Gerhard (1840). The only German woman to translate book-length anthologies of Burns's poetry in this early phase of the reception was Emilie Fierlein, who has been neglected by the writers of studies of Burns in German translation, and is only referenced in a footnote in Hans-Jürg Kupper's *Robert Burns im deutschen Sprachraum* (Robert Burns in the German-speaking world) (1979,

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.univie.ac.at/censorship/index.php?q=freiligrath&j=&id=212515&f=&i=&s=&so=0>

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187) and in passing in John R. Wilkie's essay 'Burns in the DDR' (1977, 95-105). In 1842, Fierlein published a collection of her translations of poems by Burns, Byron and Lamartine and in 1845, a further anthology of 77 translations of Burns's songs and ballads, which have also been entirely overlooked in the critical reception of Burns in German translation. Before her, Emilie von Berlepsch, who had connections with Herder, Jean Paul Richter and James Macdonald, was the first German woman to make an impact with her Burns translations, published in an account of her travels to Scotland at the invitation of James Macdonald. This four-volume work, called *Caledonia* (1802-04), was amongst the earliest critical assessments of Burns's literary work in Germany (Gillies 1960, 585).

Not only did the German translators of Burns lead the field in the European reception of Burns in the nineteenth century, but also literary reviewers in Germany made fast headway with their reports on Burns in newspapers and periodicals, beginning with the literary reports of Johann Christian Hüttner, who became the literary foreign correspondent in London for the Grand Duke of Saxe Weimar. Hüttner tried to convince the German public to read Burns by using the pre-established and well-known context of Ossian, emphasizing that the Scottish people were as familiar with Burns as Ossian. Hüttner argued that Burns was the true national bard of Scotland, whereas since Ossian was a highlander, he would not have regarded himself as Scottish (1800, 68). In emphasizing that there were Highland and Lowland differences and in contrast to von Berlepsch, placing Burns firmly in the camp of the Lowlanders, Hüttner created an attractive context for Burns as the other, unknown and more genuine bard of Scottish culture.

The Burns of Hüttner's reports was a natural poet, untouched by culture and linguistically innovative; a rural poet writing in the vernacular, who played a significant role in raising it to the level of a poetical language (1800, 67, 70-71). Hüttner managed to promote

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Burns to the Germans as a poet comparable to other nature poets and writers of idylls, such as the ancient Greek example of Theocritus and the nineteenth-century example of Johann Heinrich Voss, whose idylls were well-known to German readers (1800, 68). Above all, Hüttner aimed to explain his view of the British perspective on Burns, both within Scotland and in relation to England, highlighting the conflicted nature of the British reception with reference to the English criticism of Burns's language as 'broad Scotch' (1800, 68).

German scholars also dominated the German-language reception of Burns in relation to philological studies in the early nineteenth century. Of particular note is the forgotten contribution of the language teacher Robert Motherby (1781-1832), who was born and lived in Königsberg, but had British roots; his family belonged to Kant's circle of friends in Königsberg (von Lengerke 1832, 642; Reicke 1862, 337). In 1828, Motherby brought out a *Pocket Dictionary of the Scottish Idiom* in Königsberg, which contained a critical introduction in English and German and a dictionary that translated the language of Scott, Burns and Allan Ramsay into Standard English and German. It was written mainly to assist German readers of these writers' works and also included an appendix of notes on Scottish customs and traditions. On the occasion of his appointment to the Royal Society of Königsberg, Motherby held a lecture on Burns that he read out to the society, with the title 'Ueber den schottischen Naturdichter Burns mit einigen Proben seiner Gedichte, nebst einleitenden Bemerkungen über den schottischen Dialect, von Sprachlehrer Robert Motherby, Juni 1830' (On the Scottish nature poet Burns with some samples of his poems, and introductory comments on the Scottish dialect, by language teacher Robert Motherby, June 1830) (1832, 23-75). As with most commentaries on Burns in the nineteenth century, Motherby places Burns's personality at the centre of his essay and uses a whitewashed version of Burns's biography to contextualize the poems he translated into Standard German that excuses any unsavoury vices



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and his so-called “low” background on the grounds of poetic genius (1832, 26). Motherby focuses on Burns as a self-educated nature poet rather than a radical, and argues that the lack of interest in Burns in England and abroad was due to his use of non-standard English (1832, 26). Motherby tried to persuade his readers/listeners to read Burns by explaining that Scott and Burns used the same dialect, and since readers of Scott had already been exposed to Burns's language, they would find it easy to understand (1832, 26).

Motherby appears to be the first German to really analyse Burns's language, calling it dialect and suggesting its relationship to English is similar to the correlation between the Alemannic dialect and the standard written form of the German language (1832, 27). He informs the reader that the Scottish Gaelic of the Highlands and the Hebrides, which he also refers to as Erse, was the language of the rough tones of Ossian – whereas Burns, he argues, used a form of Scottish English – a dialect or modified form of English, which differed from the standard in pronunciation, with variant forms and archaic expressions derived from older forms of English or other languages, such as the Scandinavian and Germanic languages and French (1832, 37-38). By linking national character and culture to linguistic forms, Motherby insists that Burns is hardly translatable because language is influenced by cultural developments, historical events and unique landscapes, which are spatial and temporal influences that cannot be replicated elsewhere (1832, 27-28). For Motherby, the psychology and character of a nation is encoded in the use of language (1832, 36-37) – so the roughness of Ossian's poetic language echoes the melancholic and Romantic wilderness, as well as drawing on fables and legends for its vocabulary (1831, 30-32). Despite highlighting the difficulties of the cultural transfer of Burns's poetry in translation, Motherby translated seven Burns poems into Standard German, including: ‘To a Mouse’, ‘On Scaring Some Water-Fowl in Loch Turit’, ‘O, Stay, Sweet Warbling Wood-Lark’, ‘Tam O'Shanter’ and ‘The Vision’ - a

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choice of poems that reinforces the idea of Burns the nature poet. Motherby is a forgotten German translator of Burns and a philologist who recognized the complex nature of Burns's language. He not only helped to reduce the linguistic challenge with his dictionary work, but he also placed the poems he translated within the context of selected stations in the life of the Burns.

Whilst in Germany in the first half of the nineteenth century, translation and critical work on Burns was in full swing, the situation in Austria looked very different and began with dialect adaptations of Burns's songs and ballads rather than Standard German translations. During the nineteenth century, only a few German translators produced dialect translations of Burns: Friedrich Wilhelm Lyra in 1845, who translated Burns's 'John Barleycorn' into Westphalian Low German (Plattdeutsch) as 'Hans Gastenkäärn' (Camerer 1988, 318); Klaus Groth of Schleswig-Holstein translated Burns into Low German (1852); Karl Friedrich Kerkow (alias B. Prinz) translated Burns into Mecklenburgian Low German (1869) and Gustav Legerlotz translated Burns into a combination of Swabian Allemanic and High German (1886). Legerlotz developed a new and more complex approach of combining High German with vernacular forms by using non-standard and standard language where Burns used them. His poetry anthology, *Aus guten Stunden* (From the good hours) (1886), contains over 60 translations of Burns's poems (Muir 1894, 236).

In 1846, the Upper-Austrian dialect poet, Franz Stelzhamer (1802-74), became the first Austrian to publish versions of Burns's songs in a dialect of Austrian German. In all, he translated just five of Burns's songs from Standard German into his own 'Ob der Enns' (Above the Enns) dialect. These have the following titles: 'Dreimal Sieben' (Three times seven), which corresponds to Burns's 'O for Ane an Twenty, Tam!'; 'Ebber' (Somebody), a version of 'For the Sake o' Somebody'; 'Neamd' (Nobody) is an adaptation of 'I Hae a Wife

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o' My Ain'; and 'Fenstágsángl' (Window song or serenade) is a reworking of 'O Let Me in This ae Night'. The fifth poem is an adaptation of 'John Barleycorn' ('Hans Gerstenkern') and was published in Linz in the collection *Neue Lieder und Gesänge* (New Songs) (1868). Stelzhamer did not know English or Scottish dialects, and instead of translating directly from the originals, he adapted Standard German translations of Burns's songs that had already been published in Germany. He referred to Burns as the original author, although the original titles are not given in the editions. Even though the poetic language of the German translations was far from the vernacular idiom of Burns, Stelzhamer nevertheless must have known that the original texts were in a form of Scottish dialect from reading the introductions to the two German collections he used for his adaptations.

Stelzhamer's interest in Burns was probably first awakened by the writer Ernst von Feuchtersleben (1806-49) who noted similarities in their work in the *Wiener Zeitung* (Viennese Newspaper) (13 May 1841) (Bengesser 1987, 57). Also Ludwig August Frankl reviewed Stelzhamer's writing in the *Wiener Sonntagsblätter* (Viennese Sunday newspaper) (28 August 1842) and may have mediated Burns to Stelzhamer (Bengesser 1987, 95). The writer and journalist, Hieronymus Lorm (1821-1902), the pseudonym of the democrat and opponent to the Metternich regime, Heinrich Landesmann, published a survey of Vienna's literary scene in 1847, called *Wien's Poetische Schwingen und Federn* (Vienna's poetic flights and feathers) (Bengesser 1987, 248) and dedicated a chapter to Stelzhamer heralding him as 'a poet who could be compared to Robert Burns' (Lorm 1847, 217).<sup>7</sup> Thus it is evident that by the 1840s in the Austrian Empire, one knew about Burns's use of regional language and the folksong themes of nature, homeland and innocent love. The fact that Stelzhamer's writing was compared with Burns shows the lack of awareness of Burns's political leanings

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<sup>7</sup> 'ein Dichter, den man wohl manchmal mit Robert Burns vergleichen könnte' (Lorm 1847, 217).

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and his bawdy songs, which would have been filtered by the censors, or the unwillingness to refer to them. Politically, Stelzhamer was faithful to the Habsburg monarchy and in favour of the unification of all speakers of German. In support of the 'folk' movement, he welcomed the National Singers' festival in Würzburg in Germany in 1844 as an achievement of cultural unity through song (Plattensteiner 1903, 26).

By 1844, before publishing his Burns adaptations two years later, Stelzhamer was even known outside of the Austrian Empire as "the Burns of Austria". Evidence of this can be found in the London magazine *The New Quarterly Review* of 1844, where an unnamed literary correspondent reviewed the literary scene in the German-speaking lands, reporting of 'Franz Stelzhammer [sic], the Burns of Upper Austria' ('German' 1844, 665). He is described here as writing in an obscure dialect that is difficult for even the Austrians to understand, and is mentioned merely because Austrians 'so often compare him with your lowborn poet', meaning Burns ('German' 1844, 665). Similarly, in her book *Germania in 1850*, Baroness Blaze de Bury bestowed the epithet 'the Burns of Austria' on Stelzhamer, 'despite my national pride in Burns' as a token of her high estimation of Stelzhamer's poetry, which she claims most Austrian labourers knew by heart (De Bury 1851, II: 369).

Franz Stelzhamer, born on 29 November 1802 in Groß-Piesenham in the Upper-Austrian Innviertel (Inn district), was an independent and prolific writer who struggled to earn a living solely from his literary and journalistic work. Although chiefly regarded as a rural poet, he was just as much an urban writer, and spent long periods of his life in Vienna and Linz and other places in Austria (Bengesser 2002b, 8). Working closely with small theatres, Stelzhamer presented his poetry at public readings, often touring from place to place and according to Stelzhamer expert Silvia Bengesser, he stylized himself as a vagabond peasant-poet who literally wandered between the different social and cultural worlds of the town and

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the country of the Biedermeier age, and between the registers of Standard German and dialect (2002b, 7-15). In his day, he was known mainly for the quality of his dialect poetry, and in Austria today, as the author of the regional anthem of Upper Austria, ‘‘s Haimátg’sang’ (Homeland song), which is currently the only regional anthem in an Austrian dialect (Stelzhamer 1841, 317-18).

Like Burns, Stelzhamer had a rural background and grew up in poverty. His father worked as a farmer, tailor and weaver in order to make ends meet, yet managed to give his sons an education at the Benedictine school, St. Peter Gymnasium in Salzburg (Stelzhamer attended from 1815 to 1821) (Neves 1982, 4). He was then able to study law in Graz from 1825 and continued his studies in Vienna until 1828 (Bengesser 2002b, 13-16). In Vienna he developed close contacts with the literary scene surrounding the writers Franz Grillparzer and Adalbert Stifter, and the artist and poetry circles of the Viennese Vormärz (Bengesser 2002a, 16). Stelzhamer had begun publishing his dialect writing at a time when Standard German had forced regional dialects to the periphery of cultural expression. His efforts to change this, however, had both a creative and philological focus, and included work on an Upper-Austrian dialect dictionary, during the period from 1857 to 1860, which he never completed (Plattsteiner 1903, 34). Stelzhamer also included dialect glossaries or ‘Idiotikon’ in his poetry editions, like those present in older editions of Burns’s poems.

While Stelzhamer’s adaptations prove that Burns did have an impact on Austrian writers in the nineteenth century, the influence of his Austrian dialect Burns songs on others does not appear to have been significant at all. He published the first four in a three-volume anthology of his own dialect poems called *Neue Gedichte in obderenns’scher Volksmundart* (New Poems in Above the Enns Dialect) (1846) with the publisher J. Manz in Regensburg in Germany. This anthology reached readers in the German states more easily, who were open to

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regional dialect poetry. Despite this wider audience he did not have high ambitions for the Burns adaptations, since those published in 1846 are hidden away in the middle of the third volume. Although Stelzhamer tried to make his own poetry more available to a wider reading public in Germany, he, or his publisher, deliberately chose not to give Burns a prominent position in this collection. But this does not necessarily mean that he did not value his Burns poems. Firstly, this was not a Burns anthology but a collection of Stelzhamer's songs and it was marketed as such. Secondly, the fact that he did not normally model his work on other poets suggests that he had given the Burns songs considerable thought. One other eye-catching exception is his translation of Goethe's Swiss song in Swiss German, which Stelzhamer rewrote in Ob der Enns dialect (Plattensteiner 1903, 55). The reason why the Burns adaptations were included in this particular collection probably had something to do with his dispute with the publisher Manz over the conditions of his publishing contract. Stelzhamer's correspondence reveals that he was struggling to fill the third volume of this edition with new material and to produce the agreed amount of songs. As a result, Manz reduced his remuneration (Bengesser 1987, 42-43).<sup>8</sup> Little is known about the reception of his Burns songs and there was barely any reaction in the literary newspapers to this edition. Stelzhamer never referred to Burns directly in his letters or elsewhere, and they were not on the "hit list" of poems he performed at his public readings (Bengesser 1987, 93; Bengesser 1996, 73-80).

While this was a small contribution to the reception of Burns in Austria, we should not overlook the importance of the fact that Stelzhamer mediated Burns in dialect; the only German-language dialect poet to do this in any significant manner before him was Friedrich

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<sup>8</sup> This correspondence is preserved in the Stelzhamer archive in the Oberösterreichisches Literaturarchiv im StifterHaus [The Upper-Austrian Literature Archive in the Stifter House] in Linz, Austria. I would like to thank the staff at OÖLASH for their assistance with the Stelzhamer papers. Special thanks go to Dr. Silvia Bengesser for her assistance with the Ob der Enns dialect and the Stelzhamer poems.

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Lyra, the year before. Most Standard German translations of Burns's songs in the mid-nineteenth century were expunged of vernacular language, often to the detriment of the folksong and lyrical elements. But by converting Standard German Burns texts into dialect versions, Stelzhamer actually reintroduced the lyricism that had been lost in his predecessors' translations, and did this without knowing the original songs.

The question of which sources Stelzhamer used for his Burns adaptations was examined by the Prague comparatist, Josef Wihan, at the beginning of the twentieth century (Wihan 1903; 1904).<sup>9</sup> Wihan concluded that Stelzhamer's Burns poems were dialect adaptations of Wilhelm Gerhard's (1840) and Georg Pertz's (1859) Standard German translations. Wihan also received confirmation from Stelzhamer's widow that her husband could not understand any form of English, thus ruling out the originals as a source (Wihan 1903, 195).

The first of Stelzhamer's Burns songs is a confessional love song called 'Ebber' (Somebody) (1846, 58) and is based on Gerhard's 'Jemand' (Somebody) (1840, 217), which is a translation of Burns's 'For the Sake o' Somebody'. The song is addressed to an unnamed "somebody" for whom the speaker in the poem longs. The speaker regrets the absence of the "somebody" and appeals for their protection and safety. While Burns's song is sung from the perspective of the female figure addressing a male, Stelzhamer's addressee can be either male or female, as the gender is not specified with the use of gender-specific pronouns. In the line 'O bestow on them shelter and protection in danger' (1846, 58), the gender of the addressee is

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<sup>9</sup> Wihan compared Stelzhamer's adaptations with the collections of translations of Burns in German that were available before he published his versions. These were: Ferdinand Freiligrath (1835-39) Philipp Kaufmann (1839), Heinrich Julius Heintze (1840, 1846 and 1859) and Wilhelm Gerhard (1840), Wilhelm Cornelius (1840-41), Georg Pertz (1859) and Karl Bartsch (1865).

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unclear since the dative neuter 'iehm' (it or him) suggests either the neuter gender of girl ('das Madl' or 'Mädchen') or the dative masculine of a male addressee.<sup>10</sup>

In Stelzhamer's version there is a much stronger emphasis on the worldly, fleshly focus in the first stanza and on religious practice in the second stanza than in Burns's original. This structures the song more clearly into two halves: the love song and the religious hymn. In the first stanza, in the tradition of the love song, Stelzhamer's speaker offers more superlatives than Burns when describing his/her feelings for "somebody". In Burns, the speaker 'could wake a winter night/ For the sake o' somebody'; in Stelzhamer, more emphatically, he/she 'could wake the longest part of the night/ And dream in one go of somebody' (1846, 58).<sup>11</sup> Where Burns states 'I could range the world around, / For the sake o' somebody', Stelzhamer ends his first stanza with, 'I could travel the whole world / Out of passion for somebody' (1846, 58).<sup>12</sup> With the description of love as a passion or desire ('Liebeslust'), Stelzhamer moves away from Gerhard's more virtuous reference to love.

In the second stanza Stelzhamer deviates from Burns considerably in his use of a line that echoes the 'Sub tuum praesidium', the prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Catholic liturgy:

Blessed spirits and droves of angels

O look down sympathetically on somebody,

O bestow on them shelter and protection in danger

And deliver to me safely that somebody! (1846, 58)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> 'O schenks iehm Schutz und Schirm in der Gfahr/ Und glaits mirn sicher den Ebbern' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).

<sup>11</sup> 'I kinnát wachen dö längste Nacht/ Und trámár in ain furt von Ebbern;' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).

<sup>12</sup> 'Umraissn kinnt I dö ganze Welt / Aus Liebslust zu Ebbern' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).

<sup>13</sup> 'Liebselige Geister und Engelschaar / O schauts má freundli auf Ebbern, / O schenks iehm Schutz und Schirm in der Gfahr / Und glaits mirn sicher den Ebbern!' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).



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Where Burns invokes 'ye powers that smile on virtuous love', Stelzhamer's speaker calls upon the spirits, angels, Heaven and God to protect and guide the addressee, thus drawing on the mystical conventions and devotional traditions of prayer found in the rural Austrian context. With the direct appeals to God, 'O Heaven for somebody, / O God for somebody!',<sup>14</sup> Stelzhamer is much closer to his source, Gerhard, who uses 'O bliss! For somebody; / O Heaven! For somebody!'<sup>15</sup> (1840, 217) than to Burns's 'Oh-hon! for somebody/ Oh-hey! for somebody'. In the final stanza, Stelzhamer's speaker follows Gerhard's stammering ending, rather than Burns's 'I wad do —what wad I not', with the declaration that the speaker would do anything for the beloved: 'I wanted — I wanted — O what didn't I want, / For dear somebody?' (1846, 58).<sup>16</sup> Stelzhamer makes the independent decision not to repeat the same refrains in the two stanzas, and this gives him more scope to develop the separate focuses on the love song (stanza 1) and the religious song (stanza 2). Ultimately he creates both an earthly and a heavenly context for love, and stresses that everything humanly and divinely possible should be done to protect the absent loved one.

Stelzhamer's 'Niemd' (Nobody) (1846, 59) is a re-working of Gerhard's 'Niemand' (Nobody) (1840, 172), a translation of Burns's 'I hae a wife o' my ain', which Burns wrote in 1788, just after marrying Jean Armour (Low 1993, 507). Burns's song is written from the perspective of a strong-willed husband who refuses to become a cuckold, never wanting to share his wife with anybody. His philosophy of life is to have a carefree and positive attitude, despite very little wealth, and his central focus is on how he deals with others. For him, it is important not to be in anybody's debt in order to retain his independence. He borrows and

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<sup>14</sup> 'O Himmel den Ebberrn, / O Herrgott den Ebberrn' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).

<sup>15</sup> 'O Wonne! dem Jemand; / O Himmel! dem Jemand!' (Gerhard 1840, 217).

<sup>16</sup> 'Ich wollt — ich wollt — o was wollt i nöt,/ Für den liebn Ebberrn?' (Stelzhamer 1846, 58).

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lends nothing, serves and enslaves no-one, and does not allow anyone to beat him. At the end of the song he is cheerful and free but if nobody cares for him, he will care for nobody. While Gerhard's translation keeps Burns's reference to cuckolding, Stelzhamer tones down this theme with the more generalizing golden rule of ethics that softens the tone: 'What I would not inflict on another/ I will also not suffer from nobody' (1846, 59).<sup>17</sup> Stelzhamer also re-expresses Gerhard's 'I am nobody's lord', with the more idiomatic 'I am not the cat's master', thus minimizing the political overtones of exploitation in the ruler and subject reference.<sup>18</sup> Also, instead of taking on Burns's 'gude braid sword' that is preserved in a reduced form in Gerhard's translation, 'blade' ('Klinge'), Stelzhamer opts for a complete transfer to his contemporary rural context with the substitution of 'fist' ('Faust'), since carrying a sword was not customary amongst Upper-Austrian farmers (Wihan 1904, 200).

Stelzhamer takes the title 'Dreimal Sieben' in Standard German (Three times seven) (1846, 60-61) directly from Gerhard's adaptation of Burns's 'O for Ane and Twenty, Tam!' and also uses his opening and closing cheer 'Juch(h)eisa' (Gerhard 1840, 173). In Burns's song, a young woman sings to the man she loves, Tam, about the torments she has endured from her kin who have tried to force her to marry a wealthy old fool, break her spirit and humiliate her. She draws her strength from the thought of her future life with independent means that will begin at the age of twenty one when she inherits a plot of land, some property and money from her aunt. Her song focuses on waiting for three years before she is free to marry whom she chooses, and her promise to marry Tam.

Stelzhamer copies Gerhard's version in that he does not make a distinction between Burns's phrases 'An o' and 'An hey', replacing them both with a form of 'Juchheisa' (Gerhard) and 'Jucheisá' (Stelzhamer) (Wihan 1903, 195-96). Gerhard changed the line in

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<sup>17</sup> 'Was I kain'n Andern vermain,/ Das leid i á von Niemd' (Stelzhamer 1846, 59).

<sup>18</sup> 'Ich bin nicht Andrer Herr' (Gerhard 1840, 172) and 'I bi kainá Katz sein Herr' (Stelzhamer 1846, 59).

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Burns's chorus that refers to the time when the young woman will teach her kin 'a rattlin' sang', meaning to teach them a lesson, to the time when one chooses a bridegroom.<sup>19</sup>

Stelzhamer develops this idea further with a reference to the marriage custom of putting on a bridal wreath (1846, 60).<sup>20</sup> The crowning of the bride with a wreath of flowers becomes emblematic of marriage itself, and reveals the value that Stelzhamer places on local rustic customs. Indeed, altering the register from Standard German to dialect opens up the scope for using references to rural and regional customs that enhance the folksong quality. Furthermore, moving away from the Scottish context by changing Gerhard's and Burns's Tam to Hans, allowed Stelzhamer more freedom for using localizing features.

Gerhard's 'Liebhabers Ständchen' (Lover's serenade) (1840, 304-06) is a translation of Burns's 'O Let Me in This ae Night' and was the source for Stelzhamer's 'Fenstágsángl' (Window serenade) (1846, 62-64) (Wihan 1904, 196). In all three versions the serenade is sung by a young man and takes place late in the evening outside a house where the young woman he is singing to lives. In all three songs the young man begs to be let into the house and the young woman refuses to let him in. A comparison of the young man's persuasion strategy shows that there are differences between the three songs. In Burns's song, the man emphasizes that he needs protection from the sleet and wind and is exhausted, and attempts to get her to take pity on him and allow him inside. He first focuses on the physical dangers and then on the emotional pain of her rejection. In Gerhard's poem, the weather conditions are less severe, as the man is standing in the rain, and as in Burns's song, his hands and feet are bound metaphorically by love. Gerhard introduces a new argument to persuade the woman to open the door, namely the young man stresses that her lack of cooperation will cause his death as a result of impatience. This skilled negotiator explains that since his early death will affect

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<sup>19</sup> 'Erwählt man sich den Bräutigam!' (Gerhard 1840, 173).

<sup>20</sup> 'Da sötzt már auf'n Jungfraunkranz!' (Stelzhamer 1846, 60).

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her negatively, and only her, it is in her interest to let him inside. Stelzhamer's serenade is set in the rain and wind, and the young man arrives physically and emotionally exhausted from love, and metaphorically blind rather than lame. Stelzhamer's negotiator dramatizes the consequences of the young woman's refusal even more by making it clear that they both will die if she does not comply; Stelzhamer's young man threatens to die of impatience and is more reproachful towards the woman. While Burns's male speaker asks for protection and sympathy, Stelzhamer's is quick to reprimand her for her future defiance and raise the issue of her responsibility for their deaths, which is absent in Burns. Stelzhamer's speaker does not articulate an appeal for pity as in the other versions, which gives his first verse a more accusatory tone.

In her reply in Burns's song, the young woman rejects the reproaches and sends the young man away, arguing that the rough weather is no comparison to enduring the behaviour of a faithless man. In a comparison with a flower 'now trodden like the vilest weed' and a bird caught by a fowler, she voices her reaction on a metaphorical level and hopes to warn other women in her song. Stelzhamer's and Gerhard's female figure emphasizes that the mischievous ways and flattery of young men are the greatest threat, and both draw on Burns's images of the flower and the bird. But for Stelzhamer, the young man is much more deviant than Gerhard's neutral 'fellow' ('Bursche'); in his poem, the woman denounces him as a rogue ('Schölm'). Stelzhamer adds more detail by including a reference to the young man being sent back to his mother's house — an addition that locates the song more precisely in the social milieu of a rural community.

Stelzhamer's 'Hans Gerstenkern' (1868, 106-09) is an adaptation of Georg Pertz's 'Hans Gerstenkorn' (1859, 79-81), a translation of Burns's ballad 'John Barleycorn' (Wihan 1904, 201-02). The most striking deviation from Burns and Pertz is Stelzhamer's change to

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the setting and the characters in the opening stanza, from three noble kings in the East to three slow-witted farmers from Sankt Johann am Walde (St. John in the Wood), near the Kobernauser Forest in Austria.<sup>21</sup> The domestication strategy employed here removes the fairy tale beginning and lowers the social standing of the characters, allowing Stelzhamer to introduce a realistic setting and locally specific references that relate to his Austrian context. In Stelzhamer's ballad, three farmers plough the field rather than three kings, again revealing his focus on authenticity and peasant culture.

Like Pertz, Stelzhamer adopts Burns's strategy of personifying the barley and relating the development of the crop throughout the year on a metaphorical level with reference to human actions. Stelzhamer's Hans is killed and buried by three farmers and shocks his alleged murderers by coming back to life in the spring. In the summer he grows stronger and is protected by a crown of spikes or ears; in the autumn he turns pale and limp and his enemies triumph over his immanent death. In a figurative sense, the harvest is described as a surprise attack of rejoicing enemies bearing sickles and scythes, cutting him at the knees and tying him to a cart like a rogue. With images that resemble torture, Stelzhamer loosely follows Burns in describing the preparation of the barley and the malting process metaphorically as Hans being dunked into a water tank, beaten until he is curved as a sickle, hung up in the wind to dry and turned over on a wooden floor. His tautological use of three different verbs meaning to turn emphasizes the lengthy process of preparing the barley for use that ends with heating, drying and crushing the grain.<sup>22</sup> At the end of the process John Barleycorn's 'heart's blood' is drunk. Burns refers to the positive emotional effects of drinking as increasing joy and courage, and sees it as a remedy for man's sorrows and a widow's grief; Stelzhamer introduces references to the physical effects, such as increasing heat, stirring in the drinkers'

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<sup>21</sup> 'Drei Zeigähanser Baur —/ So rechte Holzknopf drei!' (Stelzhamer 1868, 106).

<sup>22</sup> 'Rund gwalzt und gewuzelt und gwendt' (Stelzhamer 1868, 108).

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blood and becoming more attractive, along side the psychological benefits of forgetting all woes, becoming bold and the widow's laughter. In both versions the final stanza is a toast to John Barleycorn and the mother country: while Burns wishes that Barleycorn may prosper in old Scotland, Stelzhamer changes the cultural context to Upper Austria: 'That he stays with us/ In dear Upper Austria' (Stelzhamer 1868, 109).<sup>23</sup>

Stelzhamer only acknowledged that these five poems originally came from Burns and did not give the translators Gerhard and Pertz any recognition as mediators. He probably regarded them as invisible and faithful translators. Yet traces of Gerhard's and Pertz's deviations from Burns are evident in Stelzhamer's adaptations and reveal them as the sources. Notably, Stelzhamer breaks with his models by using dialect and a more pronounced domestication and naturalization strategy; he removed the last remnants of the Scottish context, except for the name Robert Burns under the titles.<sup>24</sup> Ultimately this was an appropriation of Burns for the cause of the regional Austrian folksong.

After the publication of the 1846 Burns poems, Stelzhamer came to the attention of the British and American press in a discussion of the cultural relations between Upper Austria and Scotland in Alexander Smith's review article 'Peasants and Poets of Upper Austria and Scotland' (1862) in *The North British Review* (Selle 1981, 500).<sup>25</sup> Smith saw similarities between Austria and Scotland in respect of national characteristics and poets, using Burns and

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<sup>23</sup> 'Daß á dableibt bein uns/ In liabn Obrösterreich' (Stelzhamer 1868, 109).

<sup>24</sup> Wihan's study of Stelzhamer's German sources points to other poems which may have been influenced by Burns, suggesting that Burns's 'The Blue-red rose at Yule may blow' influenced the theme and subject matter of Stelzhamer's 'Dö olte Runkunkel' (1846, 74-76), for which he thinks Gerhard's 'Nur keinen Alten' (1840, 97-98) was the mediating translation (Wihan 1904, 205). Wihan finds that sections of Burns's 'Hey, the dusty miller' are recognisable in Stelzhamer's 'Olli Stánd sán vo Gott' (1846, 95-101) (Wihan 1904, 207-08). He also sees a correspondence between the wording of stanzas 5-8 of Stelzhamer's 's Amuxlg'sang' and stanzas 1-4 of Burns's 'Crowdie ever mair' (Wihan (1904, 647), and explores the possibility that Stelzhamer's fairy tale 's Waldfräuerl' draws on Burns's 'The Vision' (1904, 813-17).

<sup>25</sup> The *Morning Post* of 5 February 1862 refers to Alexander Smith as the author of 'Peasants and Poets of Upper Austria and Scotland' in *The North British Review* ('North' 1862, 2). This is likely to be the poet and essayist Alexander Smith (1829-67), who edited *The Poetical Works of Robert Burns* in 1865 and wrote for the *North British Review* and other periodicals.

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Stelzhamer as key examples. The points of correspondence between the two poets are highlighted as their farming backgrounds, education and the harsh years of privation, which are instrumentalized as a common social denominator that rises above the religious differences between Calvinism and Catholicism (Smith 1862, 119). Primarily, the article uses a class-dialectical model that idealizes the Austrian and Caledonian 'peasantry' for their 'remarkable mixture of shrewdness and honesty, conviviality and seriousness, independence and loyalty, and in the wonderful thriftiness and the strongly *practical* spirit which distinguish it' (1862, 120). Interestingly, on the issue of translating non-standard poetical language, the concern here is that it is Stelzhamer, and not Burns, who poses the difficulty; the reviewer argues that this is because 'for such essentially lyrical compositions, it is impossible to tolerate anything save a metrical translation' (1862, 120). Stelzhamer's future fame is seen to be compromised by the limited knowledge of his dialect within the Austria Empire, whereas Burns is deemed more accessible than Stelzhamer, linguistically speaking (1862, 120).

Smith's comparison of Burns and Stelzhamer also has a philological aim and considers the similarities between their dialects, forms of speech and accent (1862, 120). In both spoken Austrian German and Scottish English, the article suggests that a vowel is inserted between the letter *R* and the next consonant, e.g. '*worruld* for world, and *darruk* for dark', and in Austrian German 'such words as *besorgt*, *durchreisen*, *birg*, [...] become *besorigt*, *durigreisen*, and *birig*' (worried, to pass through, recover) (Smith 1862, 121). For Smith, the affinity between the Scots and the Austrians intersects along the lines of a Germanic linguistic and ethnic heritage and common local customs and cultural practices, which he argues are linked (1862, 122). Regarding Burns's use of language, the reviewer concludes that 'Burns is infinitely more German than his Austrian confrere — namely, in his perpetual [...] use of

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compound epithets', like for example 'Warm-blushing, strong, / Keen-shivering shot the nerves along' in 'The Vision' (1862, 127).

The cultural and national barriers between the two nations are broken down further in this article in a detailed comparison of the lives of Burns and Stelzhamer. Smith also quotes from a letter written by Stelzhamer that is comparable Burns's letter to Dr Moore, revealing a similar loss of piety in adult life (1862, 123). Stelzhamer is contrasted with Burns, however, as a poet who was less affected by poverty than Burns in early life, since the former was financially supported by his father, and was awarded a pension from the Upper-Austrian authorities in 1862; the year Smith's article came out. This state act of honouring Stelzhamer leads Smith into a "what if" scenario regarding what Burns could have become if he had solely dedicated his time to writing and received state support (1862, 123). Smith concludes that the essence of Burns's poetry was the experience of hardship and that this was lacking in Stelzhamer's writing. Nevertheless, both poets are romanticized as connected through 'the strong-rooted love of country and of home, the ceaseless communion with nature, the charity of soul, the art of endearing to the reader scenes and things most homely' (Smith 1862, 127).

As a way of illustrating the popularity and public awareness of Stelzhamer in Austria, Smith included an unpublished letter written by an unnamed Scottish traveller to Austria, which describes rural life in Ennsdorf in the Enns region, where Stelzhamer grew up, and refers to an evening the traveller and his companions shared with the family of an Upper-Austrian farmer, listening to his grandson singing Stelzhamer's songs (1862, 130). This anecdote establishes another parallel between the two poets, for after one of the travelling companions announced his regret that Burns and Stelzhamer were not contemporaries, nor would they have understood each other's languages, he offered to spontaneously translate some Burns to give the Austrian farmer's family an idea of his poetry. This particular Scottish



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tourist was fluent in German since he had attended an imperial cadet academy in Austria, and without delay he translated 'John Barleycorn' into an Austrian dialect extempore to the delight of his audience (1862, 131). The travel writer reports: 'The "*dour*" dealings of "The three kings into the East," although deprived of the attractive harmony of verse, and garbed in the homely prose of a strange language, still preserved sufficient of their own originality and spirit to delight their hearers, and carry them almost to enthusiasm.' (1862, 131)

Remarkably, Smith actually undertook the ambitious task of a translation of Stelzhamer's dialect poems 'D' Irrwutzen' (Weird Roots) (1841, 199) and 'Gsängl' (A Song) (1862, 132), and other extracts, using Burns-style language in hope of inspiring an edition of Stelzhamer's poems in English translation. If this article is indeed the work of Smith, as *The Morning Post* suggests, then these translations are quite a find, since he is not known as a dialect translator of Austrian German.

In his conclusion, Smith returns to the lowland-highland division model as a mark of kinship between the two poets; in labelling both Burns and Stelzhamer as lowlanders, they are viewed as having 'little in common with the different warlike tribes of the surrounding mountains', meaning the highlanders; they are therefore are more 'homely than heroic' and patriotic, in the sense of professing a love of the homeland, rather than the giving voice to a fight for freedom (1862, 137).

*The Morning Post* [London] (5 February) offered a short response to Smith's article and called Stelzhamer 'a sort of Ober-Enns Burns, some of whose verses, as quoted in the review, have the true ring, and recall some of the higher flights, of "Coila's noblest son"' ('North' 1862, 2). While the *Morning Post* was prepared to accept Smith's presentation of Stelzhamer as comparable to Burns in many respects, *The Glasgow Daily Herald* (22 February) was much more critical of the idea that Stelzhamer was 'in reality a second edition

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of Burns' ('Literature' 1862, 3). But *The Herald* did suspect that Smith had not selected Stelzhamer's best work for the comparison, just as he had passed over Burns's best work for commentary, such as 'The Cotta's Saturday Night' and 'Tam o'Shanter' ('Literature' 1862, 3).

After Stelzhamer, four other nineteenth-century Austrian poets tried their hand at adapting and translating Burns. The poet Ernst Lindner (1826-1902), born in Leibnitz (L'ubica) in the Austro-Hungarian province of Zips, wrote poetry in the Zips German dialect (Selle 1981, 126-27). His collection of poems, *Fliegende Blätter in Zipser Mundart* (1864) (Flying leaves/pages in Zips dialect) was published in Vienna and contained five translations and adaptations of Burns songs in Zips dialect. His version of 'My heart is in the Highlands', called 'Main Hèrrz ès èn Zëppsen' (My heart is in the Zips) (1864, 33-34), uses a domesticating translation strategy that transfers the landscape to the Zips region. In the subtitle, Lindner states that the song is Scottish rather than by Burns. He creates the idea that a shared perception exists between the two cultures, in relation to the emotional and patriotic reaction to leaving the landscape of the homeland. The special topographical features of the Zips landscape remain in the thoughts of the singer, and are preserved as a memory in the inscription of the poem. In addition to this, Lindner's 'Zur Siisen' is an adaptation of Burns's 'My Nanie, O' (1864, 100) and Selle is correct in finding that Lindner's 'Fannflëkkersliidchen' corresponds to 'Merry hae I been teethin a heckle', and his poem 'Bestellung' (Order) is an adaptation of Burns's 'It was upon a Lammas night' (Selle 1981, 127).

Albert Zipper (1855-1936) from Lemberg in the northern Austrian province of Galicia (Gallizien) was an accomplished translator of German literary works into Polish, and vice versa. Zipper was also a biographer of Franz Grillparzer, a literary critic, newspaper editor

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and feuilletonist (Zipper 1925, 98). While his translations of the works of Schiller into Polish did much to stimulate the cultural exchange between Austria and Poland, Zipper also published German translations of English and American poetry, including poems by Longfellow, Tennyson and Burns (Bieńkowski, 502-05). In celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1925, Zipper published a Standard German translation of the second stanza of Burns's 'Comin thro' the Rye' in an anthology of translated poems called *Was die Stunden sangen* (What the hours sang):

Meets somebody somebody

Walking along the balk,

Kisses somebody somebody

Need somebody cry?<sup>26</sup>

He called it 'Vierzeiler' (Quatrain) and it was attributed to Burns. The main change to the original is the use of the word 'Rain', meaning balk or lynchet, signalling the ploughed field rather than the rye itself.

Ludwig Sprung (1857-1922), a librarian at the University of Graz in the Steiermark, is noted by Eduard Castle as a translator of Burns's highland songs into 'Älplermundart' (Alpine dialect), but these have yet to be traced (Nagl 1937, 1218). Plattensteiner suggests that Sprung was probably encouraged by Stelzhamer to translate Burns's ballads into his own Steiermark dialect (Plattensteiner 1903, 55).

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<sup>26</sup> 'Trifft jemand jemand / Wandelnd am Rain, / Küßt jemand jemand, / Muß jemand schrein?' (Zipper 1925, 98). The original by Burns reads 'Gin a body meets a body / Comin thro' the Rye, / Gin a body kiss a body / Need a body cry?'

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The Austrian poet and dramatist Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874-1929) was inspired by Burns to write the eleven-stanza long 'Verse, auf eine Banknote geschrieben' (Lines written on a bank-note) in October 1890, when he was just sixteen years old.<sup>27</sup> Drawing on Burns's twelve-line poem 'Lines written on a Bank-note' (1786), Hofmannsthal adopts the narrative voice of Burns's impoverished, suffering poet (Hiebler 2003, 122 and Hofmannsthal 1988, 228). He probably read the original around 1889 and Thomas Carlyle's assessment of Burns in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* in May 1890 (Hofmannsthal 1988, 229).

Hofmannsthal's 'Verse, auf eine Banknote geschrieben' focuses on the poet's creative crisis within the context of the city. In the urban environment, the lyrical subject does not experience the external moods ('Stimmungen') that are present in the natural world and rarely feels the internal moods in his own heart that would inspire him to write poetry (Hofmannsthal 1988, 28). The dream as a third route to finding poetic inspiration is also closed off to him, because the imaginative moments of sensory perception such as hearing sounds, seeing images and experiencing smells also disappear in dreams and are destroyed. However, despite the monotony of everyday life in the city, inspiration comes occasionally to the poet, but only unexpectedly, and in a cacophony of loud noises and chaos. But these reach the ear like the sound of fairy tales ('Märchenklang') and the scent of trees ('waldduftig') (Hofmannsthal 1988, 28). Although the urban context has appeared to have displaced the Romantic images from which poetry is formed, creativity nevertheless still takes place at unexpected times and in short bursts. When it happens, the poet seizes the inspired image, thought or idea, and writes it down wherever he can, for example on a newspaper, a blank page in Homer or on the eponymous banknote. For Hofmannsthal, the banknote represents a

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<sup>27</sup> For critical assessments of this poem, see Hörisch (2000, 72-76), Hiebler (2003, 122-24) and Heinz (2009, 93-106).

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scrap of debt accumulated by the state that goes through the hands of thousands of people. In contrast with Burns, who curses the banknote, Hofmannsthal acknowledges that it dominates modern life. On the one hand it is exchanged for material things that can transform emotional and physical states, and on the other hand, it buys hard labour, honour and even the deceitful kiss. The realization that money is also behind the sudden flash of inspiration that opened his eyes to a rich, poetic and magic realm leads to the rejection of his own poetic voice. The speaker who felt silenced in the opening stanzas because of a dislocation from natural, emotional and dream landscapes, is left without a voice at the end of the poem. The final stanza, which is two lines shorter than the others, indicates the loss of voice and is a recognition of the trifling staleness of his own words, written 'on a carte blanche for limitless torture' and 'a blade of shining, deadly steel' (Hofmannstahl 1988, 29).<sup>28</sup> In the end, what remains is the realization that money is behind all human experiences and devalues them.

When Burns wrote his lines on a banknote, he was affected by extreme poverty and was about to emigrate to the West Indies. His lyrical voice describes a world lacking in prosperity and riches, and blames the lack of money for his personal 'woe and grief', the loss of his "lass" and the general affliction of others. This speaker views money as the tool of the unscrupulous oppressor who crushes his victims. The only possibility of escape from the system of poverty is to leave his homeland. Hofmannsthal takes from Burns the trope of writing on the banknote, which he develops further into a discussion of aesthetic poverty and a modern crisis caused by the awareness that meaningful experiences are sustained by materialism.

The commemoration of Burns's death in Austria in 1896 produced four tribute essays which are part of the Austrian reception of Burns in the nineteenth century. Jakob Schipper

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<sup>28</sup> 'Auf diesem Freibrief grenzenloser Qual' and 'Auf einer Klinge tödlich blankem Stahl...' (Hofmannsthal 1988, 29).

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(1842-1915), a German professor of English Philology at the University of Vienna, who specialized in Old and Middle English and English versification, held a 'Commemorative Address on Robert Burns' on 8 June 1896 at the formal meeting of the Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Imperial Academy of Sciences) (Schipper 1908, 248). Rosemary Selle sees Schipper's lecture as an 'anniversary adulation' that is 'part appreciation, part appropriation of the individual talent' because of its excessive canonization of Burns, and is right to state that this was a return to the older isolationist model of seeing Burns within a vacuum and without a context of influences or traditions (1981, 158-59). Schipper mainly placed his emphasis on Burns's rural farming background, closeness to nature and *Volkstümlichkeit* (folkloristic style) (1908, 249-50). In his explanation of Burns's impact on the national literature, he presents Burns as a liberator of British literature from the yoke of French neo-classical traditions, which is a reading that more resembles the achievements of the German Storm and Stress poets. Burns's national significance is compared to Shakespeare (see also Pittock 2011, 25, 36) since, he argues, both poets defined their eras by influencing the development of poetry, introduced idiomatic phrases that are now used as conventional sayings and expressed the national spirit of the people (1908, 287). Ultimately, Schipper sees Burns as an innovative poet who revived the folksong on such a grand scale that he produced new national traditions and a lasting cultural heritage for the Scottish people that were genuine and natural — his German equivalents being Goethe, and in England, Byron and Shakespeare. It is a vision of Burns as a figure that unites people culturally, and he illustrates this with an anecdote about how a song can be used to create an innocent, patriotic union amongst people from different walks of life. His evidence is the occasion of the tercentenary

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celebration of the foundation of the University of Edinburgh in 1884, where he presented a congratulatory address to the delegates (*Records* 1885, 86):<sup>29</sup>

Then, unexpectedly, the music played the song 'For auld lang syne', the immortal words penned by Robert Burns. Suddenly the mass of people stood up and in a multitude of rows, hands were crossed to form a union of a single, ideal community paying homage to their intellectual interests, while the powerful crescendo of chords rose to the dome of the hall, sung in the same enthusiastic folk tune by the assembly of more than a thousand people, fresh young students and grey haired men. (1908, 288)<sup>30</sup>

In his Imperial Academy address of 1896, Schipper presented an outdated assessment of Burns that was partly influenced by his use of early nineteenth-century Anglophone scholarship on Burns, such as John Lockhart, Dr. Currie, R. H. Cromek, Allan Cunningham and Principal Shairp. He used the autobiographical approach of relating well-known Burns songs and poems to Burns's life, quoting very little from original texts, preferring instead a selection of standard German translations, which he made changes to; Schipper included the work of Ferdinand Freiligrath (1838), H. J. Heintze (1840), Walter Hübner (1856, 421-40), Karl Bartsch (1865) and Edmund Ruete (1890).

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<sup>29</sup> The *Records of the Tercentenary Festival at the University of Edinburgh. Celebrated April 1884* reveal that at the celebratory luncheon, Schipper was seated at a table with the University of Edinburgh professors David Masson (1822-1907), Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, and John Stuart Blackie (1809-95), Emeritus Professor of Greek (1885, 60). Both Blackie and Masson were German speakers and biographers of Goethe, and Blackie, who had studied at Göttingen University in the 1820s, translated Goethe's *Faust* (1834) and published a biography of Burns.

<sup>30</sup> 'Da intonierte die Musik unerwartet das Lied "For auld lang syne", dem Robert Burns die unsterblichen Worte verliehen hat. Plötzlich erhob sich wie auf Kommando die dichtgedrängte Menge und in all den vielgliedrigen Reihen kreuzten sich die Hände zum Bunde einer einzigen, idealen, den geistigen Interessen huldigenden Gemeinschaft, während die von der tausendköpfigen Versammlung, jugendfrischen Studenten und grauhaarigen Männern, mit gleicher Begeisterung gesungene Volksweise in mächtig anschwellenden Akkorden zur Wölbung der Halle emporklang' (Schipper 1908, 288).

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In playing down any radical or liberal tendencies in Burns, as well as socially and sexually unacceptable behaviour, Schipper was towing the line of the contemporary academic circle of Burns appreciators who were publishing in Berlin and Leipzig. Selle argues that Schipper was probably politically motivated and used Burns as an example of a 'military revivalist and preserver of the status quo' and as 'propaganda for the still relatively young, unstable and insecure German national state' (1981, 159). Indeed, he criticized the idea of Burns as a Jacobite, following Immanuel Schmidt's position in his commemorative article on Burns's poetry in the Berlin journal *Preußische Jahrbücher* [Prussian yearbooks] in 1897, explaining that his interest in Charles Edward Stuart was poetic rather than a politically revolutionary (Schipper 1908, 282). However, against the trend in contemporary Anglophone scholarship, Schipper emphasized Burns as a loyal soldier, prepared to defend his country from the invading French — a patriot rather than a revolutionary (Schipper 1908, 284; Selle 1981, 159).

Schipper ended his address with the claims that Burns's impact on German literature was prepared by Johann Gottfried Herder's *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Voices of the people in songs), Gottfried August Bürger's ballads and the Romantics Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano's collection of folksongs, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The youth's magic horn) (1908, 291). Later in 1898, Schipper commented again on Burns when he opened the conference of German New-Philologists in Vienna with a celebratory greeting in the form of poem. This 'Festgruss' (celebratory greeting) presented a poetic tour through his own personal canon of World Literature, and included a reference to Burns that reinforced the idea of the naive peasant-poet who was a mesmerizing pied piper figure that charmed the common people:



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On the Caledonian field Robert Burns plows his fields  
And sings proudly in poverty and light-heartedly  
His song in praise of his local fields and his beautiful village,  
So wondrously that all listen marvelling  
And follow him enraptured, like once Orpheus,  
The blessed singer of Thrace.<sup>31</sup>

In the Burns centenary year of 1896, the Leipzig professor of English Philology, Richard Wülker (1845-1910), published his literary history, *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur von den ältesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart* (History of English Literature from ancient to modern times), in Leipzig and Vienna.<sup>32</sup> For Wülker, Burns was singular in Scotland for his success and popularity, and also for his global impact, which, he argues, made the Scottish landscape known all over the world (1907, 108). It is a short sketch of Burns's early life, graced with Alexander Naysmith's portrait of Burns, a picture of Burns's birthplace and the 1859 mausoleum in St. Michael's graveyard in Dumfries. While he uses the German translations of Karl Bartsch, Gustav Legerlotz and Freiligrath to illustrate scenes from Burns's life, like Schipper, Wülker did not try to change the simplified view of Burns as 'the most folkloristic lyricist in Great Britain' and a poet who wrote folksongs about love, drinking, nature and country life (1907, 105).<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Auf caledon'schem Feld zieht seine Furchen  
Und singt, in Armut stolz und wohlgemuth,  
Sein Lied zum Preise seiner heim'schen Fluren  
Und seines Dorfes schönen Robert Burns,  
So wundersam, dass alles staunend lauscht  
Und ihm verzaubert folgt, wie einst dem Orpheus,  
Dem gottgeweihten Sänger Thraciens. (Schipper 1898, vii)

<sup>32</sup> Wülker's assessment of Burns did not feature in Rosemary Selle's comprehensive chapter surveying the literary historical treatment of Burns in Germany.

<sup>33</sup> 'der volkstümlichste Lyriker Großbritanniens' (Wülker 1907, 105).

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In his commemoration essay in the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung* (General newspaper) of 1896, the Viennese writer Karl Federn (1868-1943) reflected on the singularity of Burns's poetry and songs, viewing him as a precursory figure that single-handedly ushered in a poetic Renaissance in English literature. Also, by rekindling the image of Burns as a poet with no roots or any recognizable connections with his own epoch or past traditions in Britain or Europe, Federn revived the isolationist approach that legitimizes the exploration of the relationship between natural genius, poverty, lack of education and a labouring background. Without models, education or links to high society, Burns can only be seen as a natural artist ('Künstlernatur') and a naïve poet who existed in a rural void (Federn 1896, 3). Federn clings to the idea of the people's poet and the notion that genius knows no rank, but paradoxically, despite arguing that Burns was disconnected from high art and literary influence, much of his discussion is a comparative study of the similarities between Burns and other writers, thus illogically creating contexts and traditions surrounding Burns. For example, he establishes a national context for Burns as following in the footsteps of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Massinger, Sheridan, Swift and Samuel Johnson; and he presents an international context of folksongs ('Volkslieder'), a term that he defines with reference to *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* [The youth's magic horn] and Goethe's 'Heidenröslein' [Rose on the heath] (Federn 1896, II: 4). While he declares that no comparison can be made between Burns and German poets, he finds, nevertheless, semi-equivalents in Béranger and Sándor Petőfi (Federn 1896, II: 5). In her study on the reception of Burns in Germany, Rosemary Selle felt that Federn's contribution was backward-looking and offered an antiquated position on Burns (1981, 157). This is certainly also evidenced by Federn's comment that the difference between Béranger and Burns was the same difference between the French Gallic and the Germanic

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temperaments, which returns to the idea of a Teutonic Burns, which was circulating around the mid-nineteenth century (Federn 1896, II: 5).

Alois Brandl (1855-1940), an Austrian professor of English Literature and Philology in Berlin who had studied under Schipper, published his tribute essay on Burns in 1896 in the Berlin journal, *Biographische Blätter* [Biographical pages]. In his essay 'Robert Burns. † 21. Juli 1796', Brandl described his view of the Scottish perspective on Burns, arguing that Scotland was proud of Burns as a poet but ashamed of his morals (1896, 237). He discusses the importance of Burns's character and background for his poetry and defends the lack of state intervention in saving Burns from an early death, on the grounds that this would have altered the unique conditions on which Burns drew to write his poetry and songs (1896, 238).<sup>34</sup> Part of Brandl's essay reviews the 1896 centenary Chambers edition of *The Life and Works of Robert Burns*, revised by William Wallace, and in support of Wallace, Brandl challenged the view that Burns was an autodidactic nature poet whose writing was modelled by genius rather than the influence of his forerunners (1896, 241). For Brandl, Burns was indeed an intertextual poet, and he discards the idea of Burns the primitive poet, in favour of Wallace's perception of Burns as a well-read, highly artistic poet, who made references to a Scottish and English literary heritage, such as Ossian, Young, Goldsmith, Pope, Ramsey and Fergusson (1896, 241). Brandl presents Burns as learning and perfecting the techniques of the folksong, and demonstrating a polished craftsmanship that he worked at by often revising texts; hence, an achievement that should not be put down to the mere effortless skills of a genius (1896, 241). Brandl's essay raised an interesting issue about commemoration: in 1896, there is moral dilemma of celebrating Burns, who like Byron, is considered to be a man of questionable moral and sexual behaviour. He resolves this by returning to the issue of nature

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<sup>34</sup> Alexander Smith also made this point (1862, 123).

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and primitivism, but instead in relation to 'Burns the man' rather than 'Burns the poet' (Selle 1981, 53), arguing that in life, he was following his natural drives 'like a fiery racehorse' and that chasing women did not do his poetry any harm, but the opposite.<sup>35</sup> This stylization of Burns as a kind of Storm and Stress figure, a giant individual in conflict with society and moral laws, is used to highlight the tragic nature of his life, and Brandl concludes: 'At this time, Scotland with its partly modern Rationalism and partly medieval Calvinism put too many barriers in his way; but a person like Burns would have been in conflict with the established powers in any era and in any country' (1896, 244).<sup>36</sup>

Evidence of a literary reception of Burns in the Austrian Empire in the one hundred years after his death, lies hidden and buried in literary newspapers, journals, travel accounts and academic essays, and not in prominent books and studies of Burns's works. The few translations and adaptations of Burns's poems published in the Austrian Empire reveal that the direct engagement with Burns via translation was modest and was dependent on the High German precedents. To my knowledge, there is also no evidence that Austrian poets turned to the work of the German dialect translators of Burns for inspiration either, and only three Austrian poets, Franz Stelzhamer, Ludwig Sprung and Ernst Lindner produced German dialect versions of Burns.<sup>37</sup> Ultimately, Burns was domesticated and naturalized in Austria, and used to improve the status of regional dialect poetry and to re-affirm a Germanic cultural identity. Rather than using Burns to bring the Scottish culture to the Austrian Empire with its landscape and identity in tact, instead, the songs of Burns became a touchstone for the campaign for the acceptance of literature in dialect and the folksong as legitimate forms of

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<sup>35</sup> 'wie ein feuriges Rennpferd' (Brandl 1896, 244).

<sup>36</sup> 'Die damalige Zeit in Schottland mit ihrem halb modernen Rationalismus und halb mittelalterlichen Calvinismus setzte ihm ausnehmend viele Schranken entgegen; aber ein Burns wäre zu jeder Zeit und bei jedem Volk emit den bestehenden Gewalten in Streit gerathen' (Brandl 1896, 244).

<sup>37</sup> More recently, Dieter Berdel has translated Burns into Viennese dialect (Berdel 2009, 2010).

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artistic expression that was to eventually develop into the literary movement of Naturalism (Burkhard 1906, 14).<sup>38</sup>

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